



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE TETRA(?)GRAMMATON.

IN the investigation of this name, it is best to commence with it as it is found at the end of many Old Testament proper names of which it is an element—יהי. This I hold to be a genuine old form. The additional fourth letter, ה, was probably, at first, what the grammarians called the paragodic ה, a merely occasional rhythmical appendage. When once added, however, it would give the word an appearance suggestive of derivation from the verb יהי; and this would naturally strike the imagination of people very prone to adopt etymologies *ad hoc*, and without a thought of their historic accuracy. In this way, I believe, grew up the etymology of Exodus iii. 14-15. When this became authoritative, the name would be written with the four letters, as a matter of course. Thus the paragodic letter—if I am right—was taken up into the body of the name, and came to be regarded as part of its root. Starting from this quadriliteral form, it is equally a matter of course that modern scholars should have decided on the pronunciation “Yahweh.” Indeed it is probable from Theodoret’s well-known statement (that the Samaritans pronounced the Tetragrammaton Ἰαβέ, while the Jews pronounced it Ἰαώ) that the “Yahweh” vocalization had been reached by the Samaritans. Given the derivation from the verb “to be,” and that vocalization is quite inexpugnable.

It will be seen from the above why I cannot accept Kuenen’s defence of the “Yahweh” pronunciation¹. I agree with that illustrious critic and historian of the Religion of Israel that “no one who wrote down these four letters,” *ab initio* “can have meant to indicate any other pronunciation”; and that “if he had intended his readers to say Yahu or Yaho, for instance, he would have omitted the fourth letter.” But this is no evidence whatever of the “theory which finds in Yahweh the original form and pronunciation, and in Yah, Yahu, &c., abridged derivatives from it.” The appearance of יהיה on the Moabite Stone shows that this form was at least in occasional use about nine centuries before Christ; but the inference

¹ *Hibbert Lectures*, 1882, note 4.

that "consequently the pronunciation *Yahweh*" was current at that time seems to me altogether unwarranted.

Probably the exact form of the alternative theory which I now present was not thought of by Kuenen, or was thought of only to be summarily dismissed as an unscholarly hypothesis. We are told—even unto this day—that יהוה "has not its own original vowels (probably הוה) but those of אֱלֹהִים." Concerning the latter, the *Jewish Encyclopedia* says, *sub voce* Adonai:—"Originally an appellation of God, the word became a definite title, and when the Tetragram became too holy for utterance Adonai was substituted for it, so that, as a rule, the name written YHWH receives the points of Adonai and is read Adonai, except in cases where Adonai precedes or succeeds it in the text, when it is read Elohim. The vowel-signs e, o, a, given to the Tetragrammaton in the written text, therefore, indicate the pronunciation Aedonai, while the form Jehovah, introduced by a Christian writer about 1520, rests on a misunderstanding."

Nothing could be more positive. If belief could safely rest on authoritative teaching, here we have it. The Christian who had the hardihood, several centuries after the close of the Maṣorah, to "introduce" the form Jehovah, lends an element of piquancy to the lesson. I must confess that, up to very recently, I parroted this statement of the hybridism of יהוה, without a suspicion that it could be effectively challenged; till, in a moment which usually comes to me, on any subject however sacred, I asked: "What is the evidence of this?" From that moment my belief in it was doomed.

The first thing which I saw, on opening my eyes, was that יהוה has *not* the vowel points of אֱלֹהִים. It has only two out of three. The excuse that ה is written as ו because it is under ' evidently will not hold; for, on the hypothesis that the vowel points of יהוה are a *q'rey perpetuum* of אֱלֹהִים, the ו is to be read, not with ' , but with א, which is impossible. Where the Maṣoretes intended יהוה to be read as אֱלֹהִים, they put the vowel points of that word, notwithstanding that ו fell under ' , and who can doubt that they would have put the vowel points of אֱלֹהִים to יהוה, if they had intended, *by those vowel points*, to indicate that it was to be read as אֱלֹהִים?

That it was so read I, of course, do not deny. Indeed, this is part of my case. That reading had become habitual ages before the addition of the vowel points to the Hebrew text, as is shown by the rendering of the Tetragrammaton in the Septuagint as *ὁ Κύριος* and by Jerome as *Dominus*; and there was no need to reinforce this substitution by vowel points. Still the Maṣoretes might not have

¹ Kautzsch's *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (English edition), p. 311.

thought so had not the vowel points of יהוה happened to be very similar to those of אֱרֵנִי. Save for that lucky accident the vocalization of יהוה might not have been retained for us, though it might have been inferred from its development from יהי; for the addition of the final ה־ would naturally modify יהי into יהו. With ה־ added, יהי becomes יהוה, as with ך added it becomes יהוהך. This, I hold, is why we find יהוה in the Maçoretic version.

So far, then, we are left with יהי as the real name. But this is further analysable. The final י is simply the old nominative affix, and is no essential part of the word. As Professor Chwolson says, in his valuable essay on *The Quiescents (or Vowel-Letters)* יהי in *Ancient Hebrew Orthography*: "the nominative termination in o or u . . . has remained in single and compound proper names." It is because this י is only an obsolete case-ending that we have a long list of duplicate forms of names ending in יהי and יהי respectively¹. Fundamentally, therefore, the name is יהי, which becomes יהי with the ancient suffix of the nominative, and this becomes יהוה by the addition of the paragogic ה. The quadriliteral form has grown from the trilateral, which, in its turn, has arisen out of the biliteral. Whether, as Friedrich Delitzsch suggests², this can be farther traced to a primitive uniliteral form, I will not inquire; for at this point the matter passes beyond the evolution of the name within Hebrew limits—the problem which I have set myself to solve. My solution of that problem may be tersely stated in the words of Isaiah xxvi. 4: יהוה בִּיהוּה "Y'howah is Yah." That is all. But it must be clearly seen and firmly grasped before any genuine advance can be made in finding satisfactory answers to the most interesting questions which surround the name of the Hebrew Deity.

J. H. LEVY.

¹ See Ginsburg's *Introduction to the Massoretico-Critical Edition of the Hebrew Bible*, pp. 387-394.

² "Der Gottesname, welcher im Munde des hebräischen Volkes stets üblich, ja vielleicht ausschliesslich üblich war und blieb, ist יהוה, wobei zugleich das Bewusstsein von י, als dem wesentlichen Namensbestandteil sich fortdauernd lebendig erhielt."—*Wo lag das Paradies*, p. 159.